

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 /066 R

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-----092463 120452Z /23

P 120146Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION USBERLIN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 093331

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, MILI, BQG

SUBJECT:SOVIET FLAG TOUR DESTRUCTION OF POLITICAL POSTERS

REF: A) USBERLIN 832; B) USBERLIN 808; C) BONN 6265

1. DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT THE INCIDENT IN WHICH A SOVIET
FLAG PATROL REMOVED AND DEFACED POLITICAL POSTERS IN WEST
BERLIN IS SERIOUS ENOUGH TO WARRANT A SEPARATE AND FIRM
PROTEST. WE BELIEVE THAT THE BONN GROUP TEXT PROPOSED IN
PARA 6 OF REF C TREATS THE PROBLEM CORRECTLY. UE DO NOT
CONSIDER IT NECESSARY OR USEFUL TO CITE SPECIFIC PROVISIONS
OF THE GERMAN PENAL CODE TO THE SOVIETS AS SUGGESTED IN REF
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A. THEY ARE UNDOUBTEDLY AWARE THAT THEY EXCEEDED THEIR AU-
THORITY BY TAKING ACTION IN A WESTERN SECTOR. THAT THEY
HAVE COME TO US TO REQUEST THE REMOVAL OF THE POSTERS CON-
FIRMS THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE THE AUTHORITY TO DO SO PRO-
PERLY RESTS.

2. WE WOULD PREFER TO DELETE OR SOFTEN THE FIRST SENTENCE

IN THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF THE BONN GROUP PROTEST IN WHICH THE SOVIET ACTION IS TERMED A "SERIOUS INCIDENT." WHILE WE AGREE THAT SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES OF THE CITY IS CERTAINLY SERIOUS, WE WOULD PREFER TO RESERVE "SERIOUS INCIDENT" FOR MORE FLAGRANT ACTS IN WHICH THE INTENT

TO INTIMIDATE OR PROVOKE IS OBVIOUS.

3. AT THE SAME TIME THE ABOVE PROTEST IS MADE WE BELIEVE THE ALLIED REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD ALSO REPLY TO THE SOVIET REQUEST MADE TO THE MISSION (REF B) FOR REMOVAL OF THE POSTERS. DEPARTMENT SHARES US MISSION'S VIEW (PARA 12, REF B) THAT ALLIES SHOULD NOT GET INTO THE BUSINESS OF REMOVING RELATIVELY INOFFENSIVE POSTERS. WHILE DEPARTMENT WILL AWAIT ALLIED VIEWS, OUR PRESENT PREFERENCE WOULD BE TO HAVE THE ALLIED SPOKESMAN ASSURE THE SOVIETS THAT THE ALLIES HAVE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THEIR REQUEST AS WE DO EACH REQUEST MADE THROUGH PROPER CHANNELS; REMIND THEM THAT THE ALLIES DID ACT AT THEIR REQUEST TO PREVENT THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BREZHNEV POSTERS LAST NOVEMBER; BUT INFORM THEM POLITELY IN THIS INSTANCE THAT THE ALLIES DO NOT CONSIDER THAT THE CONTENT OF THE POSTERS (WHICH ALSO RIDICULE AT LEAST ONE ALLIED HEAD OF GOVERNMENT) GO BEYOND PERMISSIBLE POLITICAL COMMENT SO AS TO WARRANT ALLIED INTERVENTION. SOVIETS SHOULD ALSO BE INFORMED THAT THE DETERMINATION OF WHAT IS PERMISSIBLE POLITICAL COMMENT IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN IS SOLELY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE WESTERN ALLIES.

4. AMENDMENTS TO BONN GROUP TEXT PROPOSED IN BONN 6623 (JUST RECEIVED) ARE APPROVED. VANCE

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NNN

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